

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments made herein.

A copy of JP 6-54462 is enclosed herewith as requested by the Examiner.

Claims 1–9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The amendments made to claims 1–3, 6, 8, and 9 herein are believed to cure any indefiniteness. Withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Claims 1–5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese document no. JP 2002-361414. Traversal of this rejection is made for at least the following reasons. JP 2002-361414 fails to teach or suggest moving the torch a given amount from the welding termination position in both a second direction opposite to the first welding direction and in a third direction away from the weld beads. JP 2002-361414 only discloses moving a welding torch in one direction from the welding termination position, namely in the direction opposite to the welding direction. Moving the welding torch in another direction away from the weld beads is absent from JP 2002-361414. Because JP 2002-361414 fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation as set forth in independent claim 1, JP 2002-361414 cannot render obvious claim 1, or claims 2–5, which depend therefrom. Withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of claims 1–5 are respectfully requested.

Claims 6, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese document no. JP 2002-361414 as applied to claims 1–5 above, and further in view of Japanese document no. JP 5-245638A. Claims 6, 8, and 9 depend from claim 1, which is believed to be

allowable over JP 2002-361414, as discussed above. JP 5-245638A fails to make up for the deficiencies of JP 2002-361414. Specifically, JP 5-245638A does not disclose, teach, or suggest moving a welding torch from a welding termination position in two directions, opposite the first welding direction and away from the weld beads. Thus, if neither JP 2002-361414 nor JP 5-245638A, alone or in combination, teach or suggest each and every element of claim 1, then the combination of JP 2002-361414 and JP 5-245638A cannot render obvious claim 1 or claims 6, 8, and 9, which depend therefrom. Withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of claims 6, 8, and 9 are respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 39625.

Respectfully submitted,
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